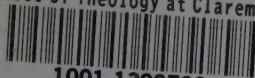


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Christ the Way

FOUR ADDRESSES GIVEN AT HAILEYBURY

JANUARY 11 AND 12, 1902

BY

FRANCIS PAGET, D.D.

BISHOP OF OXFORD

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH

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PREFACE

THE following Addresses, which were given at a Meeting of Schoolmasters, College Tutors, and Lecturers, at Haileybury, were written under some stress of other work, with insufficient time; so that I might well hesitate to publish them. But that hesitation has been put aside in deference to a wish which has been expressed to me.

F. OXON.

CUDDESDON,

1902.

I.

WITH a strange instability, I think, the conduct, the ordering of life seems to us at one time a simple and straightforward task, at another complicated and obscure. One who had lived long, and earned a high character for good judgment and equity, told me once that if a man only tried to be just he was not likely to fail. And that is a conviction which at once commends itself to the conscience. But, on the other hand, as one carries one's purpose of doing right into the actual business of life, with all its tangled mass of good and evil, its temptations that look like opportunities, its opportunities that look like hindrances, its mixed motives, and unsuspected issues, and tendencies making for righteousness yet disfigured by wilfulness or affectation or narrowness, it grows hard sometimes to know whether one is really on the right track, or whether, for all one's good

intention, one may not haply be found even fighting against God.

Let us think a little further, a little more fully, of these contrasted aspects of life—of its apparent simplicity, its apparent perplexity and difficulty. It would jar on conscience and on the belief in God to think of the simplicity as delusive, to believe that an honest and good heart, wanting sincerely to know what is right, could go blundering, stumbling into what is wrong. And there are conspicuous instances of the power, the soundness, of simple insight. There are the verdicts of children, often keen and severe in their unconventional and untroubled clearness. There are the plain, penetrating sentences with which poor people sometimes startle us. There is the fine instinct of a true woman's heart. Nor is it inexperience or blindness that gives this facility of judgment : the insight belongs to a certain "innocence of eye," a strength and singleness of vision that goes straight to the mark, the central point of a position. And so it is that the maturest utterances of the most thoughtful minds, the sentences that those who have lived long and wisely have power to fasten into our hearts, are

often what we should call common-places, if it were not for the height and distinction and reality with which the character of the speaker somehow ennobles them. We come away from listening to a great teacher; and if we try to sum up what he has just taught us, it will often go into a few familiar words. "Be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man:"—all the splendid intelligence, the wide experience, the masterly study of mankind, came back to that for Walter Scott.¹ And if we turn to the Bible itself, we may mark, I think, the same falling back upon the simplest bidding as the last outcome of a life's learning. So it has been noted of the First Epistle of St. Peter, that the one idea of life as a pilgrimage haunts it all;² so of the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, that their characteristic is the urging and repeating and dilating upon truths which have been the food of his life;³ and so all the witness of the Apostles, for the guidance of the unimagined centuries to come, closes with the picture of St. John borne in the arms of

¹ Lockhart, "Life of Sir Walter Scott," p. 779, ed. 1871.

² C. Bigg, "St. Peter and St. Jude," p. 6.

³ Alford, "The New Testament," vol. iii. p. 84.

his disciples into the assembly, and repeating over and over again the same three words, the all-sufficient commandment of the Lord.¹

It seems to me almost like looking at a different world to turn from such a scene to the complexity of life and the puzzles it sets us. I will say little of experience; for each has his own store of that, about which another's words may seem exaggerated, inexact, and, perhaps, provoking. But think how human life has seemed to those who, in the great ways of art, have tried to tell us what they saw in it. With all the risk involved in talking of what I do not understand, I will point to three instances. We may form diverse estimates of Browning's work: we may be sometimes baffled by "Paracelsus," and inclined to despair of "Sordello;" but does not much of the difficulty come of this—that he is trying to lead us through the tangled forest of an inner life, haunted by strange forms of temptation, lit by wandering lights, amidst broken paths and clues; that he is bold enough to hint at significant fragments of experience and character and purpose, of which his piercing

¹ Fearon, "Sunday Mornings at Winchester," p. 63.

insight¹ makes him sure, though even he may see them but by glimpses? Or think of music, such as that of Beethoven or of Brahms. Its theme is human life, and passion, and resolve, and suffering. To many it speaks with a wealth and subtlety of eloquence beyond the reach of words; and even those who do not understand it feel that there are great thoughts surging through it. And what a vast and stormy world it is out of which those thoughts rise up! Or as one stands before one of Rembrandt's portraits of old age;² as one looks and looks at the face, harassed, furrowed, worn with all the cares, the failures, the ambitions, the disappointments, the decisions, the renunciations, the humiliation and endurance and discipline of an inscrutable past; as one guesses at what had been unlearnt and learnt, lost and won, in the battle of life,—one may suspect that all the difficulties we have felt, and far more too, were

¹ Cf. R. W. Church, "Life and Letters," p. 343.

² Such as, for instance, Nos. 190, 1674, 243, 1675, in the National Gallery; or the portrait of an old man at the Hague; or, on a somewhat different level, the portrait of the Burgomaster Six, in the Six Collection at Amsterdam—a portrait instructively unlike that of the same man in early life, shown in the Rembrandt Collection a few years ago at Burlington House.

met and somehow lived through long ago, and that there are deeper and more subtle tasks for a heart to deal with than we have yet, perhaps, surmised. Yes; those in whom the power of insight and the power of expression meet, speak to us in their several ways with one voice: the vision of life which they disclose to us is full of mystery, and trouble, and hard questioning, and high purpose scarcely held through storms of difficulty and distress. And we, as we learn more of life, in ourselves and others, know that there is reality in that vision. It matches with much that we feel, much that we guess at, much that we can neither grasp nor disregard. The complexity of life is as true as is the simplicity with which some find their way through it.

It is as we feel, for ourselves and for others, the strain of that complexity, the need of some sure clue and guidance, that we may turn with new hope and longing towards Him Who said, in words of unfathomable import, "I am the Way."¹ The crying need to which those words are addressed has been rightly told: "That which most palsies the heart and the limbs for action is the doubt whether there be any true

¹ St. John xiv. 6.

Way, any line of coherent purpose designed and achieved either in our own lives or in the larger sphere of the world without. No doubt this is a palsy which implies some measure of serious reflexion ; it is only too easy to escape it by being beneath it, if it is hard to rise above it.”¹ Yes ; there seems to be indeed a great deal of purpose and effort and attainment in the world that is untroubled by any such perplexity. There is an unreal, precarious imitation of simplicity, which is in character and worth very different from the simplicity of the saints—the simplicity that raises and redeems life. There are many objects for which men make with all their might, and to which the way is clear enough ; and those who hurry along it may wonder why so much has been written about the difficulty and obscurity of life : they see no mystery at all in it—nothing that cleverness and persistency and business habits may not cope with. But we are bound to try to think things out, and that for others as well as ourselves ; we know that there are times in life—temptations, sorrows, calls—which penetrate the depths of the heart, and want the

¹ Hort, “The Way, the Truth, and the Life,” pp. 21, 22.

whole manhood of a true man to meet them ; we have to face these things, and—God help us !—to prepare others for them. We suspect, at least,—sometimes we are quite sure of,—the Divine and everlasting elements, the traits of unearthliness and immortality in human beings ; and we are forced, by our vocation, to be, so far as we can, thorough, thoughtful, reverent in regard to the meaning, the capacity, the use of life ; to turn away from no hint of a mystery in it ; to listen for every whisper of God's Voice in it. It may be, for some of us, but seldom that we have to speak to others of its deepest reality ; but it may make all the difference to them, perhaps in some far-off day, whether we ourselves are living as conscious of that reality or not. It is *easy* to live and work on the surface of things ; but so living we make others superficial—we leave them unwarned of the depths, unpointed to the heights. It is *hard* to live and work with a constant thought of those mysterious truths, which we only know in part ; but so living we may raise the plainest task into the highest service, not by breaking through its plainness, but by what we ourselves are as we go about it. Yes ; but that means a life on

the levels where the ways of the world, the ways of ordinary success, are wholly lost ; a life that has parted with this world's thin and commonplace imitation of simplicity ; a life that can get no guidance or reassurance from conventional standards or the praise of men ; a life that ventures to be independent, that struggles on through many difficulties, refusing half-truths and hasty solutions : patient of silence and of darkness, till God speaks, till God gives light. In such a life it is that the complexity of a man's task is felt, often to the verge of despair ; and then for such a life the one sure secret of the steadfast and the true simplicity glimmers out in Him Who says, "I am the Way."

"I am the Way." It has been truly said that these words include two great declarations : "first, that the whole seeming maze of history in nature and man, the tumultuous movement of the world in progress, has running through it one supreme dominating Way ; and second, that He Who on earth was called Jesus of Nazareth is that Way."¹ We need both declarations. The first especially, as we look at the world

¹ Hort, "The Way, the Truth, and the Life," pp. 20, 21.

around us, as we let its strangeness, its suffering, its apparent aimlessness, its pathos, fill our hearts. There may seem still an unspanned gap between all that and Jesus Christ our Lord as the interpretation of it: we may fail to find the knowledge, the thoughts which are needed to bring together Him and human life: to read its riddle by His Light. And yet we may feel that in Him, incarnate, suffering, dying, rising, reigning, there is Light; there is that which looks like giving a clue, a meaning to much that else were merely dark; there is that which steadily and supremely goes on affirming that God is Love, whatever life for a while may seem, and that under its inscrutable confusion He is working out a purpose, though His way be in the great waters, though His footsteps be not known.¹ We need not "quench all wonder with Omnipotence."² There is more than that in Christ: there is enough, at least, to give us hope, and the patience that we need for work.—But it is of the second declaration especially that I would ask you now to think. As we call in our thoughts from the problems of the world

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 19.

² George Eliot, "The Spanish Gipsy," p. 7:

around us ; as we think of our own tasks, our own purposes and difficulties, we may hear Him saying to us one by one, "I am the Way." Let us try to see whether we cannot bring that Way more deeply, more dominantly, into our work ; whether we cannot bring our work more simply into that Way. And here let us end with one thought about these words of His. It is a thought I cannot rightly express ; but it is inseparable from His teachings and from the witness of His servants ; and perhaps we all are moving forward in some realization of it for ourselves. He does not say to us merely that He marks or shows the way, that He has trodden the way, and that we must follow Him ;—all that is true ; but it is less and easier than the whole truth.¹ For He says, "I am the Way." Not only after His example, not only in His footsteps, must we find the way, but in union with Him, and in Himself. He speaks to us of an ordering, an animating of our life such as St. Paul knew when he wrote, "Christ liveth in me."² We may shrink, perhaps, from that : we may fear lest we should be parting company with common sense and steadiness of thought,

¹ Cf. Hort, *ubi supra*.

² Gal. ii. 20.

lest we should slip into using words without a definite meaning; or we may not untruly feel that our past and present have not reached the level upon which such words are realized. But let us not shut our hearts to them, or lower our eyes from the hope they tell, lest we grow content to desire less than He longs to give us. It is much that He should show us where to plant our feet; it is more that He should stretch out His hand to lead us as we falter, to save and raise us as we stumble. But in the mystery of spiritual life and of His Holy Spirit's work there is yet more. There is that which we ask, that which, if our hearts be ready and our desire simple, we shall, I trust, with increasing clearness find, in Holy Communion. For we shall more and more really know Him to be indeed the Way, as He answers our prayer of faith that "we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us."

II.

WE are trying to think of our Lord Jesus Christ as Himself our Way. So He declared Himself to His disciples, "in the same night that He was betrayed ;" so He has shown Himself to His servants, who through all the trials and confusion of their time have had the courage to trust Him ; and so, we cannot doubt, we may take to ourselves, one by one, in whatever difficulty we may find in life and work, the assurance of His words, " I am the Way."

The words, as we have already seen, must mean more than that He is our Guide and Pattern. But as we try to go beyond that easier thought, as we try to urge our minds closer up to the full and distinctive import of His declaration, we find it hard to think clearly, to win through to a point of which we are sure. Perhaps an expression more or less analogous in another

field may help us. It has been said of literary style that it is the man himself; and again, that the closer and truer a word is to a thought, the closer and truer a thought is to a soul, the closer and truer a soul is to God, so much the more is the beauty and the excellence attained.¹ (You may recognize the familiar phrases through a very awkward translation: it is, I suppose, what they come to.) Let us fasten on the former of these two similar sayings: "the style is the man himself." If a man wants to find the best way of saying what is in his mind, he will not do it by considering how others would say it; he will not do it by simply imitating even the best masters of style. He may learn much by this, he may save himself from mistakes, correct many faults, gain a finer sense of rhythm and order, and above all, set himself a high standard. But it is not thus that the very best work of the best minds is done; not thus that the ideal relation between substance and form is realized; not thus that thought goes purest and clearest into utterance. In the highest attainment of a great writer, after he has escaped from immaturity and before he verges towards decline, the

¹ Additional Note A.

style is as spontaneous, as instinctive as the thought; it is simply the mind appearing; it is the man himself, as though he were overheard thinking; its truth and grace and dignity are simply the truth and grace and dignity of his character.¹ Of course, such work is most rare; but there are, at least, approximations to it—approximations to that perfect realization of the law of liberty; and those instances in which we feel that the faults of the work are simply the natural expression of the faults of the man, illustrate no less that standard of the true coherence or unity of thoughts and words,—the style is the man; it would be better, if he were.

Carry this over into that far more adequate revelation of a human heart which is made, not merely in speaking or writing, but in life: “when a soul declares itself by its fruit—the thing it does.”² A man’s attitude towards the

¹ Cf. St. Cyres, “François de Fénelon,” pp. 38, 39: “Fénelon was of the same opinion as Erasmus, who once bade men of letters despise the art of writing, after they had learned to write: ‘the whole secret of eloquence,’ he said, ‘lies in carefully watching what Nature does, when she is unconstrained.’”

² R. Browning, “By the Fireside.”

world, and towards his own task, and opportunities, and duties, and responsibilities in it ; his bearing amidst its difficulties and demands ; the course he holds through it, and his making for this point or that ; his way of life ;—is not all this the utterance of his character, cohering so closely with what he is that we may almost say his daily life is the man himself coming out ? Of course, we cannot so judge any man ; we know so little that there is for us an insuperable gap between the utterance as we receive it and the soul that is uttered in it. Even in regard to ourselves, as we try to judge ourselves by our own lives, we may stumble one day into unreasonable harshness, another day into slovenly self-excusing. But if we could (as is quite inconceivable) not only see all, but also do justice to all, as God sees and understands,—

“ All that the world’s coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account ;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man’s amount ;
Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped : ” ¹

¹ R. Browning, “ Rabbi Ben Ezra.”

if we could form any true idea of that dark continent which stretches between and weds the outward and the inward of a life ; and if, yet more, we could imagine a man's career not in its fragmentary yet inseparable stages, not killed by dissection, but as a living whole, not as it passes in time, but as it abides in eternity,—then we might find that the distinction between a man's way through life and his way of life was vanishing ; and that the milestones, the hedges, the country traversed, meant less, and the way itself meant more ; and then we might see with what truth the man's way is the man himself. It can be altered only as he is.

So let us lift up our hearts to the mystery of God's grace, to the work of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. "I am the Way," He says. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," His true servant says. If in reality a man's way is the man himself simply coming out ; if the man himself, at the highest point of his manhood, can receive into himself the Spirit of Christ ; if, by the power of the Spirit, Christ can come to live behind and in the deepest movements of the soul, to inform, and raise, and advance, and illuminate, and perfect the man's self, to be the soul of the

man's soul ;—then there is, indeed, a meaning to be seen, transcendent yet not obscure, hard to grasp yet not uncertain, in His saying, "I am the Way." The soul that receives His presence and yields itself to His grace has in Him a new attitude, a new bearing towards all things. As more and more simply it answers to His Spirit and is renewed and animated by Him, so the mind, the character that it expresses in life, is His Mind, His Character. He is the Strength, the Light, the very Heart of that self that comes into utterance ; He is its distinctive, characterizing principle ; He is its way of living, its way of life, its way through life. The daily life is the man himself coming out : yet not he, but Christ living in him. The man's way is the man himself—yet, again, not he, but Christ in him.

Words may be overstrained and overburdened, and may break down ; thoughts may lose their clue, their confidence, as we try to think and speak of this. And yet, even in the failure to attain to any clear sight of it, we may gain something ; for we may grow surer, or at least more steadily trustful, that there is reality, that there is truth and soberness there where holy

and humble men of heart say that they have found it; that the greatest of all promises are not mere figures of speech; that the highest hopes are not always and for all men wrapped in clouds. We work in a hurry, most of us, in a whirl of impressions and demands and excitements; the days go by with little time for the real toil of thought, until at last, perhaps, we almost lose the taste for it,—till our minds get into the way of slipping, swerving off from the strenuous and concentrated effort of thinking and of praying. With more simplicity and less distraction men have found a surpassing reality in that life in Christ, that life of Christ in us, which is indeed the essential and distinctive truth of Christian ethics. Christ has been the Way for men and women “of whom the world was not worthy;” who, nevertheless, bore a blessing with them through the world, and, even if it hated them, yet left it the richer and the more hopeful through their lives. If some have spoken of life in Christ, of Christ in them, with that deficient sense of the mystery in their words which suggests a deficient reality in their thoughts, others have so spoken and written of it, that we must have

resolved that they cannot be sincere before we can judge them to be unreal ; and many more have lived and died, many more, thank God, are living now, in silent, humble reliance on the indwelling Presence of their Lord, and so finding that no word of His fails of its fulfilment. To have known the surprises of strength and beauty in one soul that has thus taken His words as simply true, and set itself to live and pray accordingly, may make it impossible for a man to lower his own hope from that union with Christ which is the secret of His Saints, and the bond of their communion.

As that union with Him means more to us, and as experience helps us to rely on it, we may find more and more the simple truth of His saying, "I am the Way." The difficulties of life, the complexity of its problems, the infinite variety and the hidden depths of character in those for and with whom we have to work, are not penetrable by any natural ability ; theories and generalizations may do little more than give regularity and method to our mistakes ; if we are hasty we are sure to go wrong, and even if we take pains we are by no means sure to go right. It is only as He to Whom

all hearts are open, He Who can draw all men to Himself, lives in us, that we may hope to move aright in the work that He has given us, to touch and help and raise the hearts that He through our lives would bring to the knowledge of His love. As our thoughts, and aims, and desires, and purposes are brought into captivity to Him, and more and more unreservedly submitted to the law of their true liberty, to be chastened and purified and transfigured by the power of His indwelling, we shall live and work in the true Way; we shall be to others what He, in His care for them and us, would have us be. It may involve at first the renunciation of much that seems effective, of much that the world is ready to applaud; we may find ourselves lonely sometimes; we may have to do without human reassurance, and the light for which we wait may grow but slowly. Yet, "though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not tarry." "The just shall live by his faith."¹ Those who clear their hearts for Christ, who commit their way to Him, who distrust the appearance of effectiveness apart from Him, and seek, as it were, to

¹ Hab. ii. 3, 4.

stand back more and more that He may the more simply have utterance and power in their lives,—they may sometimes seem strangers and foreigners in the world, embarrassed, isolated, unready, unsuccessful. But they purify their work, even as He is pure ; the real, deep needs of men are met by that which they bring ; they live in the true Way, and bear with them light amidst the troubles and sorrows that men hide from others ; they link the effort of their lives with that one line of purpose and achievement in which the effort of a life is raised beyond the risk of loss.

III.

"I AM the Way." The words were spoken by our Lord "in the same night that He was betrayed," in the same night that He instituted the Holy Eucharist. They were spoken to those whom He had drawn to Himself and, with the wisdom and tenderness and patience of the Perfect Teacher, trained for His work. They to whom the words were spoken were oppressed, dismayed, thrown back into perplexity, by knowing that He Who had called them to follow Him, in following Whom they had forsaken all, was leaving them with all their main expectations unfulfilled, and going where they could not follow Him. Perhaps they felt not very far from the heart-breaking and sometimes demoralizing experience of those who, having made, in the temper of discipleship, a venture of unqualified

self-committal, have found themselves disappointed and cast adrift. And as their bewilderment speaks out, He comforts them with words characteristically unlike those which men are apt to use. He does not give prominence to the thought that they have not long to wait, that He trusts what He has told them in the past may help them, and that God will enable them to hold on somehow when He is gone. Rather He tells them that when He is gone He will Himself be more to them than He has ever been. "I will not leave you desolate: I will come to you;"¹ "The Comforter, Which is the Holy Ghost,"² will come to them; and as He is the very Spirit of Christ, His coming to them will bear into their souls Christ Himself.³ And that same night He instituted the Holy Eucharist.

The convergence, the coalition of what He then did, not only with the teaching of that night, but also with all that in the bygone days, while bearing, doubtless, at the time, its own more general meaning, had also prepared

¹ St. John xiv. 18.

² St. John xiv. 26.

³ Cf. R. C. Moberly, "Atonement and Personality," pp. 194-198.

attuned, and predisposed their hearts for the words and the act that were to come, has been described by Hooker, in words that rise above the wasteful vexation of dispute. The passage, in the sixty-seventh chapter of the fifth book,¹ is too long to quote; but I venture to say that it shows how a natural and obvious thought filled the mind of one who was bent on avoiding controversy, in an age when controversy was almost as general as the reading of newspapers is now; when statesmen and women and artisans² were alike busy with it; when it was unhappily absorbing strong minds and disastrously upsetting weak ones. Hooker turns the pages of the Gospels, and it seems to him impossible to hold apart the promises that went before that night, the words that were spoken on it, and the mystery that was then brought into human life. "He that eateth My

¹ Additional Note B.

² Cf. the letters in the fifth section of the ninth book of Fuller's "Church History;" the account of the audience at the Temple Church, and the divisions of the Privy Council concerning Hooker and Travers in the seventh section; for the eagerness of women in the controversy, Hooker's preface, ch. iii. § 13; and for the confidence of "the simple and ignorant," ch. iii. § 9, and Bancroft's story of the "Artizan of Kingston," in the "Survey," ch. xxxi.

Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him ;” “He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me ;” “I will come to you ;” “At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you ;” “Take, eat, this is My Body ;” “Drink ye all of it ; for this is My Blood.”¹ Though many months passed between the first two of these sayings and the rest ; though the last of them is recorded by one Evangelist, and the rest are recorded by another ;—yet if we simply think of them as spoken by the same lips, and those the lips of One Who could not forget what He had said, or miscalculate what it would suggest, or be content that it should be widely and profoundly and lastingly misunderstood ; if we look at them as standing in the same disclosure of truth, for all time, for all men,—it seems indeed unnatural, to say the least, to keep them from converging, meeting, coalescing. We can hardly doubt, I think, that the Eucharist given in that night, when Christ was leaving those whom He had chosen out of the world, leaving them to bear their overwhelming trust through the

¹ St. John vi. 56, 57 ; xiv. 18, 20 ; St. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.

unimaginable difficulties, the darkness and strangeness and hatred of the years to come,—was brought out of the depths of His wisdom and love, to be for evermore and in an especial sense the means through which He would make good His words ; the means through which He Himself would come to dwell within His servants' souls, would come to hold them in the calm, glad strength of union with Himself amidst the storm of trouble ; that He might live in them, that they might live in Him ; that, as they went out into the confusion and hardness and misery of the world, as they lived and worked and suffered amongst men, it might be He Who, present in their souls, endured and conquered through their lives ; that He Himself might be the Way they held, the same through all perplexity, not lost, though darkness hid all else ; the one sure Way of Life, through the long dreary hours, "till the day should breathe" on them, "and the shadows flee away."¹

Let us think together of the Holy Communion. Hooker's great plea concerning it, amidst the sterilizing flood of controversy in his time, was, you know, that men should check back their

¹ Song of Solomon ii. 17.

thinking from the field in which they differed and disputed, and concentrate it resolutely, earnestly, on that wherein they all, or almost all, might meet and be at one—on “the consummation of the Holy Communion by the entrance of Christ Himself into the soul of man;”¹ that men should “more give themselves to meditate with silence what we have by the Sacrament, and less to dispute of the manner how.”² The line of thought to which he points has seemed to me in many regards a stronger and deeper and more hopeful line than it is sometimes made to appear. But at all events, so far as a man’s own life and work and burdens are concerned, it leads into a field of thought in which no true, humble thinking will be misspent; in which thinking seems very close to praying; and praying cannot be unheard.—Think of the endless avenues of blessing, of light and life, of onward journeying in the knowledge and the love of God, towards which our eyes are raised by so great promises.—Think of the wisdom and goodness of our Lord in so leaving us not desolate, nay, rather, in granting

¹ Paget, “Introduction to the Fifth Book of Hooker,” p. 175.

² Hooker, Bk. V, ch. lxvii. § 3.

to us, in guarding for us one scene, one tract of life, into which desolateness cannot come.—Think of His understanding of us and of our needs, in that He thus meets our hearts; not leaving us to feelings and attainments of our own, which may not be always at command, which may, perhaps, seem hardest just when want is greatest; not leaving us to force our own way out anyhow when we are in “heaviness through manifold temptations;” but drawing us up, in the august simplicity of the Sacrament, in the assured expectancy of the heavenly blessing, away from the consciousness of our poverty and weakness to the certainty of His riches and power.¹—Or think what it has meant that through all the ages of Christian history, all the ages in which Christ’s servants have lived on in His faith and fear, upholding the world’s hope, in oppression and persecution, in loneliness and weariness, in apparent failure and defeat, this has been their stay, their strength, their secret of inward peace and joy. Think what it means now, that in every land, in the widest diversity of trials, in far-off mission stations, in the crowded misery of great towns,

¹ Additional Note C.

in the isolated struggle to raise up the lagging life of a lonely village, under the strain of monotonous discouragement, in hospitals, on battle-fields, the same uplifting and renewing Gift is sought and found.—Or, think again, of some of those who stand out above the level plains of human life, and who have owned what the Holy Communion has been to them. Strangely diverse, indeed, are the types of character that God has thus led on towards the fulfilment of their work for Him. Think, for instance, of Thomas à Kempis, living out his seventy years in that routine of his monastery,¹ which may have looked as flat and featureless as the country round about it; remember what he found in Holy Communion: “O wonderful condescension of Thy tender mercy towards us; that Thou, Lord God, Creator and Giver of life to all spirits, dost deign to come unto a poor soul: and with Thy whole Deity and Humanity to satisfy its hunger.” “For this most high and noble Sacrament is the health of soul and body; the medicine for all spiritual languor;

¹ On the little slope of the Agnetenberg, near Zwolle, not many miles from the Zuyder Zee. There he lived from 1399 to 1471.

hereby my vices are cured, my passions bridled, my temptations overcome or weakened ; greater grace is infused, virtue begun is increased ; faith is confirmed, hope strengthened : and charity kindled and enlarged." ¹ The light of that Gift, the power of Christ's Presence in his heart, lives in the pages that still speak to our hearts across the centuries, the vast spaces of change that sever our lot from his. Or, think again, of him whom I have already cited, of Richard Hooker, the very type and pattern of the true student,—listen to his confession of faith and of experience : ² "This bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold, this cup hallowed with solemn benediction availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body ; . . . with touching it sanctifieth, it enlighteneth with belief, it truly conformeth us unto the image of Jesus Christ ; what these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, His promise in witness hereof sufficeth, His word He knoweth which way to accomplish ; why should any

¹ "Imitation of Christ," bk. iii. chs. 3 and 4, ed. C. Bigg.

² Hooker, Bk. V. ch. lxvii. § 12.

cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this: 'O my God Thou art true; O my soul thou art happy'?" Or think of Samuel Johnson, calling his man-servant to prayers for some nights before Easter Day, on Easter Eve discoursing with him on the Sacrament, and then writing down in his Prayers and Meditations that most touching, humble record of his Easter Eucharist—as solemn, to my mind, as noble, for all its quaintness, as any record we can read of faith and love.¹ Or, again, think of Charles Gordon. I remember one story of him, which seems to me to tell as much as many words; and I may venture to recall it, even though I cannot authenticate it, since it is in clear accord with much that he has written.² Think of him simply apologizing for an outburst of impatience, with the plea that it had been so long since he had been able to receive the Holy Communion.—The mediæval monk,

¹ Additional Note D.

² Cf. *e.g.* "Gordon's Letters to his Sister," pp. 212, 215, 218, 268; and "Reflections in Palestine," pp. 52, 66, 98; and p. 56: "Why are we all so dead? Why is not our flesh quickened? Really, I think that many, many are really good, earnest Christians. Why are they so morose? . . . Truly, I believe it is because the Holy Communion is so much neglected."

the Elizabethan student, the great scholar of the eighteenth century, the hero-soldier of the nineteenth,—how far apart the lives and characters of the four men seem ! And what thoughts they should raise in us of the manifold wisdom of God, the power and resourcefulness and tenderness of His grace, so leading one by one the hearts He made to know and love Him, so refreshing all with one great Gift, diverse as humanity in its wealth of blessing !—Or, yet once again, think of some life which you yourself may have known and watched and loved ; some life that quietly and steadily rested in the assurance of that Gift, and so advanced from grace to grace, meeting all trials, bearing all duties, hallowing all gladness through the virtue of Christ's Presence ; or think, if God has granted you to see it, what that Gift can be in the last hours of a holy life, in the conscious drawing near to death. And then let all these thoughts come in to help us to thank God and take courage for the years, the tasks, the troubles that may lie before us ; since He Who thus has been His servants' Light and Strength is ever longing to be ours.

Without thinking narrow thoughts, without

doubting the breadth of our Saviour's compassion and power to bestow His Presence when and as He wills, without wanting to draw in things spiritual those hard and sharp lines which even things natural resent, without being solicitous to answer every question that need not be asked, let us as humbly as we can seek the great Gift of His indwelling Presence as He bade men seek it in the same night that He declared Himself to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We may but slowly sound the depth of our own need ; we may find it out, perhaps, through some stern discipline of helplessness or sorrow or perplexity ; God grant us then to know also the wonder of the help He has prepared for us. Nothing can be sheer loss that forces us away from worldliness and self-reliance and superficialness, and brings us, with increased simplicity and longing, to wait on Him for help. It is in ourselves that we are straitened ; it is the narrowness of our hearts, the timidity of our hopes, the quick flagging of our ventures of faith, that keep His Presence from broadening out in our lives till they are transfigured and made His ; till it may grow true, even of us, that He liveth in us—animating,

guiding, irradiating us, so that He Himself comes out in our lives, and speaks Himself to the hearts of those to whom His errand brings us. Only let us try as well as we can to prepare our hearts for Him, as we are bidden in those familiar words that very long ago we learnt, and often, it may be, have taught to others : "with true repentance of our former sins, with steadfast purpose to lead a new life, with living faith in God's mercy through Christ, with thankful remembrance of His death, with charity towards all men ;" that no cherished sin which we are not ready quite to part with, no sullen despondency about our own amendment, no divided allegiance and trust, no dull forgetfulness of His mercy, no grudge, or jealousy, or unkindness, or resentment may check the light He would send streaming through our hearts, the deepening of the joy that no man taketh from us, and of the peace that passeth all understanding.

IV.

"I AM the Way." The words were spoken by our Lord "in the same night that He was betrayed:" and a few hours after He had spoken them He was hanging upon the cross. Perhaps the words came back to St. John, and may have gone on sounding through his soul, as he stood beside the cross. And who can imagine what mysterious tides of thought and feeling, what penetrating and absorbing wonderings, what meetings of love and adoration and resolution and dismay, may have filled his heart, if in that scene he was dwelling on those words? "I am the Way." "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" How wide apart the two voices sound! And how far away from all the ordinary forecasts of human life, and of its relation to God; how high and far-reaching and adequate (if we could but grasp and hold it) for all that can

come on us, is the truth which could keep loyalty and hope alive, unalienated, perhaps even unalarmed, through that scene, as He, the Way, hung desolate and dying on the cross of shame ! For St. John could not yet know all that St. Paul had learnt, all that St. Paul had taken home to heart and mind, when he could plainly bring together depth and depth, as he wrote, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."¹ -Already the paradox of the cross—if one may use the phrase—had passed away ; already those who knew Christ as the Way, knew that the crucifixion was no bygone stage in the fashioning, the making possible of the Christian life, no mere event of the vanished past ; that it remained, and was for ever to remain, as a distinctive note, an essential element of power in that life, to be accepted and appropriated by all those who

¹ Gal. ii. 20 ; vi. 14.

sought through grace to bring their hearts, their lives, into union with Him ; to be their inward glory, their strength for victory, the secret of their appeal to others ; in their lives as in His, that which should draw all men unto Him.¹

And so it is now. The manifold grace of God lights up the Christian life with a wealth of blessings : peace and joy are in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody ; the experience of His loving-kindness, and the glad discovery of the beauty that His grace achieves in human hearts ; the calm, it may be, of increasing clearness, increasing witness to His truth Who says, " This is the way : walk thou in it ; " the sense of escape from many terrors, from much vain self-harassing—the gain of independence. This and much more may come to those for whom Christ is the Way. But all along, as the spring, the light, the rule, the safeguard of it all, there is the cross. We may wonder at it, be offended at it, think, for a while, that too much is said about it, try, perhaps, to evade or qualify or defer it. But we shall never, I think, know all that is stored for us in Christ, all the good that

¹ St. John xii. 32, 33.

God has prepared, even in this world, for those that love Him ; we shall never really understand our own lives, or bear all the help that God would have us bear to others, till we have learnt the lesson of the cross, till it takes its place at the very heart of all our thinking, all our actions. We shall never hold a true and steady course through the world's confusion till those distinctive notes which the cross imparts to a man's view of life and duty, of loss and gain, of what is and what is not really important, are the notes of our bearing towards the world. Christ is the Way—Christ crucified for us ; and they who would find and hold Him as the Way must take up their cross, and that daily. "Lo, in the cross is all, and there is no other way to life and true inward peace. Walk where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, thou wilt find no higher way above, nor safer way below, than the way of the holy cross. Set thyself, therefore, like a good and faithful servant of Christ, to carry manfully the cross of thy Lord : Who out of love was crucified for thee." ¹

"Crucified with Christ." "They that are

¹ "Imitation of Christ," Bk. II, ch. xii. : "Of the King's Way of the Holy Cross."

Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." What does it mean? At heart, I suppose, it means that they have left off coveting, planning, seeking things for themselves; that they do not want to shine in the world, or to be rich or popular, or to live easy, comfortable lives, or to have their own way and assert themselves, or to enjoy the relish of success, or to shift off on to others what is toilsome and unpleasant. It means that they have ceased to talk much or think much about themselves, and that with all simplicity their hearts are bent on moving, doing, suffering, as the Spirit of Christ in them may will. They have done with worldliness; they have done with self-seeking; they do not look for an easy life in the world where Christ was crucified and thousands live in wretchedness. Their faces are set towards God, and the light that glows in them comes from Him; it is the light of self-forgetful kindness, the light of gladness in the welfare of others, the light of thankfulness, the never-failing light of a resolved and trustful patience.

Yes; for those who give all, find all. It is the half-accepted cross, the cross recognized in the

life but shut out of the heart; the cross bowed to, as it were, here and there, but never taken into the shrine of choice and purpose—the council-chamber of the soul;—it is this that is disappointing, this that ends in weariness. But St. Paul, crucified with Christ, glorying in the cross, finds in that dying to self-love the very way of life, the very law of liberty, the unflagging spring of health. His words bear up those which were lately used by the editor of the “*Imitatio*,” who has entered, I think, most deeply into its meaning, and written of it with singular beauty: “The cross which is an abstraction has little meaning, less authority, and no comfort. Thomas (à Kempis) never mentions the cross, except as the symbol of the Redeemer, the mark of His friends, the fountain of love and joy, and the key to the kingdom of heaven. Hence the self-denial which he teaches is not a living death, but a dying life. The final word is not death, but life; the tribulation leads to the Kingdom of God, which is ‘peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.’”¹

¹ “*Imitation of Christ*,” ed. C. Bigg, p. xlix. Cf. Hort, “*The Way, the Truth, and the Life*,” p. 218: “Abnegation is not itself the good, but the most universal condition for the

“The final word is not death, but life.” Yes ; if in Christ we die to the world, we shall know that with Him, even on His cross, is the well of life. Then “Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me? Oh, put thy trust in God : for I will yet give Him thanks, which is the help of my countenance and my God.”¹ It may be hard to turn away, hard to rise as He calls us away, hard, even, not to be querulous or rebellious when, in His mercy, He lays His Hand on us² and leads us away, from the things that gratify us and are pleasant and delightful to us. Self-love is strong and subtle in us, and we may have taught our hearts to be persistent and clever in self-seeking : it may seem almost impossible, for instance, to do without the praise of men, or the outward tokens of success. But there is no true peace, no freedom, no security, save as we look away from all these things, and with undivided allegiance yield our hearts and lives to the grace of God, taking Christ to be our Way, ready, when He wills and as He wills, human attainment of the good. Christ promises not happiness, but life ; yet sometimes life through death ; the right hand may have to be cut off, or the right eye plucked out.”

¹ Ps. xliii. 5, 6.² Cf. Gen. xix. 16.

to endure the cross, despising the shame. Then it is, I think, that the true liberty and independence comes into a life. Then it is that the complexity, the difficulties of life are rightly met, not with the self-confidence of tact or policy or masterfulness, but with a temper, a bearing towards life, a simplicity of desire and purpose and hope, an unselfishness without reserve, incapable of the real blunders, and strangely apt to go right where great ability may be at fault. And then it is that there accrues to a man the clearest power to bear witness to the truth. For no teaching goes so straight to human hearts, in all the diversity of their ways and needs, as the silent power of an unworldly and unselfish life. The traits that pass into a character from the cross of Christ are the secret of the victory that overcometh the world: they will do more than anything else can do to win men to the desire of goodness, the quest for God, the knowledge of His love. Let us, as we end our thinking together, think of but one of these traits—the central, the most distinctive of them all, perhaps. Let us think of that bright, constant, hopeful patience, which glows with a steady, gladdening

light in the lives of those who seek nothing for themselves, who live indeed for others, for the love of Christ. It is much never to show impatience, to be always the same, under disappointment, in weariness and pain, when things go wrong, and people are stupid and vexatious ; to go on steadily, without a sharp or fretful tone in the voice, without petulance, or hasty judgment, or shaken trust, or slackened diligence and effort. Those who reach that point of self-mastery and self-possession may come to be leaders of men, and do great things. But I think there is a still higher, deeper power in the patience of those who are indeed crucified with Christ, crucified to the world, and whose life is hid with Christ in God ; the patience of those who, as they move about the world, may set even thoughtless people wondering where that quiet, bright grace was learnt ; feeling somehow that after all they that are Christ's have hold of something that the world cannot give, and have found a Way better than the world's ways, and that there is reality and truth in those words which have, perhaps, the strongest power words can have to touch the springs of longing in the hearts of men : "Come unto

Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”¹

¹ St. Matt. xi. 28-30.

ADDITIONAL NOTE A.

IN rendering the two phrases, I had to trust my memory. They are given here in the context in which I had met them, in Gratry's "Les Sources," pp. 16, 17—

"Si vous entendez le style dans le sens de ce très-beau mot, 'le style c'est l'homme,' le style, alors, c'est aussi l'éloquence, quand toutefois on la définit avec un maître habile : 'L'éloquence n'est que l'âme mise au dehors.'

"Cela posé, je trouve tout, comme règle pratique de l'art d'écrire, dans le fragment de saint Augustin qui vient d'être cité.

"Le style, l'éloquence, la parole dans le sens le plus élevé du mot, c'est l'homme, c'est l'âme mise en lumière. C'est-à-dire que si vous voulez apprendre véritablement à écrire, il faut apprendre à éviter, non-seulement tout mot sans pensée, mais encore toute pensée sans âme.

"'Le style,' disait Dussaulx, 'est une habitude de l'esprit.'—'Heureux ceux,' dit Joubert, 'dans lesquels il est une habitude de l'âme.' Et Joubert ajoutait : 'L'habitude de l'esprit est artifice ; l'habitude de l'âme est excellence ou perfection.'

"Donc, pour écrire, il ne faut pas seulement sa présence d'esprit, il faut encore sa présence d'âme ; il faut son cœur, il faut l'homme tout entier ; c'est à soi-même qu'il en faut venir. Saint Augustin commence

donc parfaitement quand il dit : JE ME CHERCHAIS MOI-MÊME.

“ Mais il faut plus. Non-seulement il faut apprendre à éviter toute parole sans pensée, et toute pensée sans âme ; mais encore il faut éviter, je dis, pour bien écrire, tout état d'âme sans Dieu. Car, sans doute, ce que l'éloquence entend mettre au dehors, ce n'est pas l'âme dans sa laideur, c'est l'âme dans sa beauté. Or, sa beauté indubitablement, c'est sa ressemblance à Dieu. Car, comme le dit encore excellemment Joubert : ‘ Plus une parole ressemble à une pensée, une pensée à une âme, une âme à Dieu, plus tout cela est beau.’ ”

ADDITIONAL NOTE B.

THE following is the passage referred to (Hooker, "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity," Bk. V. ch. lxxvii. § 4):—

"They had learned before that His Flesh and Blood are the true cause of eternal life; that this they are not by the bare force of their own substance, but through the dignity and worth of His Person which offered them up by way of sacrifice for the life of the whole world, and doth make them still effectual thereunto; finally, that to us they are life in particular, by being particularly received. Thus much they knew, although as yet they understood not perfectly to what effect or issue the same would come, till at the length, being assembled for no other cause which they could imagine but to have eaten the Passover only that Moyses appointeth, when they saw their Lord and Master with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven bless and consecrate for the endless good of all generations till the world's end the chosen elements of bread and wine, which elements made for ever the instruments of life by virtue of His Divine benediction they being the first that were commanded to receive from Him, the first which were warranted by His promise that not only unto them at the present time but to whomsoever they and their successors after them did duly administer the same, those mysteries should serve as conducts of life and conveyances

of His Body and Blood unto them, was it possible they should hear that voice, 'Take, eat, this is My Body ; drink ye all of this, this is My Blood ;' possible that doing what was required and believing what was promised, the same should have present effect in them, and not fill them with a kind of fearful admiration at the heaven which they saw in themselves? They had at that time a sea of comfort and joy to wade in, and we by that which they did are taught that this heavenly food is given for the satisfying of our empty souls, and not for the exercising of our curious and subtle wits." With this may well be compared what the Very Rev. T. B. Strong, Dean of Christ Church, has written in "The Doctrine of the Real Presence," pp. 28, 29.

ADDITIONAL NOTE C.

I VENTURE to cite here a passage from a writer who has seemed to me less widely known than, I believe, he should be—Alexander Knox.

“Whenever the strictly supernatural influence of the Eucharist is overlooked, or unacknowledged, (and such will naturally, if not necessarily, be the consequence of rejecting the mysterious designation of the symbols,) attention to this Christian ordinance will be little more than gratuitous ; a natural effect, perhaps, of Christian ardour, because it is matter of Divine injunction, but not a necessary result of Christian sincerity. It is, in this view of it, merely a positive law of Christianity, acting exclusively upon the feelings of fear, of duty, or of gratitude. Contemplated as the actual vehicle of Christ's own ineffable influences to the capable receiver, it becomes a matter of intrinsic interest ; to neglect which, would be to neglect both present and everlasting salvation. Besides, the sacred Eucharist, when thus conceived, becomes not only more attractive to the upright Christian, but also much more consolatory. When this holy ordinance is supposed to rise above the other means of grace, not by any appropriate influence of omnipotent power, but only by its more direct reference to the mercy and goodness of the dying Redeemer, the Christian, in partaking of it, can expect benefit in proportion only to

the actual state of his devotional feelings. Let his confidence in the promised grace of Christ be ever so sincere, his hope of a fresh communication will rise or fall with the conscious ardour, or the conscious coldness, of his affections. But these not being at human command, and seldom or never moving in exact proportion to the settled purposes of the heart, the consequence, on the whole, will naturally be, that when animating influences are most needed, they will be least expected. Whereas, if there be a persuasion that Divine grace is communicated in and through the Sacrament, by a special exercise of Divine power, it will follow that, not an inability to co-operate, but solely an incapacity to receive, will obstruct the communication.¹

“The importance of this distinction, I humbly conceive, will be felt by every one who has religiously inspected himself. In efforts of the heart to rise towards God, *to will* may be most sincerely present with us, when how to perform that which is good we find not. Even in an advanced stage of piety, there may be least power of mental exertion, when its sensible necessity is greatest ; for instance, under infirmity of body or mind ; or when some distressing event has caused what St. Peter calls

¹ It is not possible, within such narrow limits as I have prescribed to myself, to guard the thought expressed in this paragraph against the danger of misapprehension. To answer this purpose, I must have gone into something like digression, which would have perplexed the thread of my discourse. I will, therefore, merely observe that I proceed upon a principle of the Catholic Church, rested in by the revisers of our Liturgy in 1661, when conferring, previously, with the Nonconformist divines, namely, that “God’s Sacraments have their effects, where the receiver doth not, *ponere obicem*, put any bar against them.”—Account of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of both Persuasions, etc., p. 99.

‘heaviness, through manifold temptations.’ How comfortable, then, amid this ‘weakness of our mortal nature,’ to reflect, not only that God *can* internally aid and strengthen us by His own secret influences, independently of our active co-operation, but that He has assured us of this unspeakable blessing by such a permanent pledge and means of its accomplishment, as, by its very character and nature, supersedes all co-operation, and requires solely the faculty of reception. If only we are athirst, we have here a fountain of life to which we may indeed come without money, and without price; and which comes to us without any diluting intermixture, as immediately flowing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb.” —“Remains of Alexander Knox,” vol. ii. pp. 234-236. Cf. the Very Rev. T. B. Strong, “The Real Presence,” pp. vi. vii.

ADDITIONAL NOTE D.

THE following is the passage referred to. It is quoted in Boswell's "Life of Johnson" (vol. vii. pp. 253, 254, ed. 1835) from Johnson's "Prayers and Meditations," pp. 171-175 :—

"April 3, 1779, 11 p.m.—Easter Eve. This is the time of my annual review, and annual resolution. The review is comfortless ; little done. Part of the Life of Dryden and the Life of Milton have been written ; but my mind has neither been improved nor enlarged. I have read little, almost nothing. And I am not conscious that I have gained any good, or quitted any evil habits.

"April 4, 1779.—Easter Day. I rose about half an hour after nine, transcribed the prayer written last night ; and by neglecting to count time sat too long at breakfast, so that I came to church at the First Lesson. I attended the Litany pretty well ; but in the pew I could not hear the Communion Service, and missed the prayer for the Church Militant. Before I went to the altar, I prayed the occasional prayer. At the altar I commended my ☉ Φ,¹ and again prayed the prayer ; I then prayed the

¹ These letters (which Dr. Strahan seems not to have understood, p. 192) probably mean *Θνητοὶ Φίλοι*, "*departed friends*."—C. Some critics have objected to *Θνητοί* in this sense ; but it is so used in Euripides (see "Supp.," v. 275).

collects, and again my own prayer by memory. I then received, I hope with earnestness; and while others received, sat down; but thinking that posture, though usual, improper, I rose and stood. I prayed again, in the pew, but with what prayer I have forgotten. When I used the occasional prayer at the altar, I added a general purpose,—to avoid idleness. I gave two shillings to the plate.

“Before I went, I used, I think, my prayer, and endeavoured to calm my mind. After my return I used it again, and the collect for the day. Lord, have mercy upon me! I have for some nights called Francis to prayers, and last night discoursed with him on the Sacrament.”

Cf. “Johnsoniana,” in Boswell’s “Life,” vol. x. p. 113, No. 629: “The learned and excellent Charles Cole having once mentioned to him a book lately published on the Sacrament, he replied, ‘Sir, I look upon the Sacrament as the palladium of our religion: I hope that no profane hands will venture to touch it.’”

THE END.

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